

THE
Commonweal

Prayer Under the First Amendment

RELIGION

and

THE SUPREME COURT

Leo Pfeffer

William B. Ball

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THE COMMONWEAL

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THE COMMONWEAL

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

On from Atlanta

IN ATLANTA Dr. Martin Luther King told the delegates to the fifty-third annual convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People that "the wind of change is sweeping away the unjust order" of segregation with hurricane force. But in the city in which he spoke NAACP pickets paraded in front of major hotels and restaurants, protesting a widespread refusal to provide service to Negroes, and shortly afterward Dr. King himself was jailed elsewhere in Georgia for his part in another civil rights demonstration.

This is not to say that Martin Luther King was wrong in his speech, however. The walls of segregation *are* going down. As he noted, since the 1955 Montgomery bus crisis most major Southern cities have eliminated segregated bus transportation. Since the sit-in movement started in 1960, Dr. King said, more than one hundred and fifty cities in the South have integrated their lunch counters, and since the freedom rides of 1961, segregation in interstate travel has all been eliminated.

These are giant steps, and Catholics may be excused if they feel a little pride over the NAACP's praise of Archbishop Rummel, and at its citation of the fact that the one desegregated college in Mississippi is a Catholic seminary, which sacrificed its tax-exempt status for the sake of principle. But the desegregation road is a long one, and the proceedings at the NAACP convention testified to the current shift in thinking among Negro leaders who face the practical problem of where to move next.

No one denies the accomplishments of the freedom rides or the sit-ins. In the immediate future, however, executive secretary Roy Wilkins declared, picketing must be aimed at such specific targets as ending job discrimination rather than at vague objectives or even at obtaining services without segregation.

Heavy emphasis on jobs can now be expected,

since Negroes face what NAACP labor secretary Herbert Hill called "a major crisis in unemployment." One out of three Negroes in Northern industrial centers, he reported, was unemployed during the last year. Indeed, delegates were told that Negroes experienced unemployment during the past year at a rate two and a half times as great as that for whites. With many unions still practicing discrimination against Negro entry into skilled crafts, more than fifty per cent of all unskilled Negro workers were unemployed for substantial periods during 1961-1962.

With the unemployment rate still high, all this adds up to a shift in emphasis by Negro leaders in the months ahead. The drive for equality will concentrate on job opportunities, with the pressure directed at the Federal Government, offending unions and private industry. And since half the nation's Negroes live in the North, new emphasis will be placed on activities there, with major efforts planned for Chicago, Washington, New York, San Francisco and Detroit.

IF NEGRO strategy has shifted, however, the basic goals have not, and this is a good time to reassert the conviction that these goals are just and worthy of our wholehearted support. In years gone by there took place in this country considerable debate on the subject of segregation, with some people of good will holding out for "separate but equal" facilities. For our part, we have always considered segregation by virtue of race immoral and inadmissible, but the point is that in many ways the argument was always completely without relevance. In truth, equal facilities for the Negro have been a myth and are so today, in those areas of both North and South where segregation is the rule.

The plain fact is that a Negro has measurably less chance for a good education and a normal job, precisely because he is a Negro. He has less chance to live in a good house in a decent neighborhood

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precisely because he is a Negro. His chances of adequate medical care are cut down and his life expectancy reduced, because he is a Negro. Indeed, when he dies the chances are that his body will be cared for only by a Negro undertaker and that he will be buried in segregated ground.

These are the facts of segregation. In the North the Negro is hit with such facts without the blessing of the law, or even in spite of the law. In the South the Negro runs into a wall of segregation which is backed by law. Both systems are abominable, and both should be eliminated.

Negroes get tired of waiting. Who can blame them? Dr. James M. Nabrit, Jr., of Howard University put it this way: "We are sick of evasions, weary of excuses, fed up with promises and want action now, liberty now, equality now." The proper response to Dr. Nabrit, we think, can be put in the same words used by the Catholic Bishops when they condemned segregation in 1958.

Negro citizens, the Bishops said then, "wish an education that does not carry with it any stigma of inferiority. They wish economic advancement based on merit and skill. They wish their civil rights as American citizens. They wish acceptance based upon proved ability and achievement." This is what Negroes want, and, in the words of the Bishops, "No one who truly loves God's children will deny them this opportunity."

Geneva Again

IT HAS always been something of an irony that, over the decades, the orderly and dependable city of Geneva should have been the site of so many volatile, confusing and disorderly international meetings; or, even earlier, the plotting ground of so many revolutionary movements. In recent years, the most notable meeting has, of course, been the seemingly perpetual, futile disarmament conference—a conference which has shown that man is at least a patient beast, but also a stubborn and intractable one as well. Neither the example of the tidy and methodical Swiss citizenry nor the threat of nuclear annihilation has so far been enough to make a decisive difference to the great powers.

For our part, each time the conference has reconvened we have sought, usually in vain, for some hopeful auguries. This time, maybe this time, we have thought. But it never turned out that way. The same old hopes gave way to the same old stories about the same old, almost ritualistic, obfuscations, delays and obstructions. The results were, inevitably, a hopeless series of deadlocks.

Well, we are hopeful again. The auguries? First, the report that the United States is tacitly willing to accept another round of Soviet tests in return for establishing a final cut-off date early in 1963 for all nuclear testing, seems to us to promise an attractive Western strategy. Secondly, the reported progress in detecting underground tests should make it easier for the U. S. and Great Britain to meet the Soviets half-way. Thirdly, neither the Soviet Union nor the Western nuclear powers (save France) have much to gain from indefinitely protracted future testing. Fourthly, we think the whole world—even Russia—is just plain sick of the whole business. We do not expect much progress toward disarmament. But on the issue of a test-ban treaty, despite initial Soviet intransigence, the optimists may for once turn out to be right.

The Monitum on Teilhard

IN NOVEMBER 1957, when the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities ordered Father Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man* removed from seminary libraries, the dismay among Teilhard supporters was all but palpable. Prevented during his life from publishing his writings on evolution, it seemed unfair to many that his work should, even after his death, be suppressed. Was this, many could hardly help asking, the way the Church treated its scholars and intellectuals? Now, with the issuing by the Holy Office of a *monitum*, or warning, against "ambiguities and even grave errors" in Teilhard's writings, the question recurs.

At first glance, the case of the Holy Office against Teilhard may appear weak. Apart from the "ambiguities," the central charge of the *monitum* appears to be that it was "improper" in the first place for Teilhard to have attempted to adapt the terms and concepts of evolutionary theory to theology and philosophy. For those who recall the words of Pope Pius XII to the twenty-ninth General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, this seems an odd

SUMMER SCHEDULE

In keeping with the usual practice, The Commonwealth will again appear on alternate weeks from the middle of July to the middle of September. Forthcoming issues will be dated as follows: August 10, August 24, September 7 and September 21. From then on The Commonwealth will resume its normal weekly printing schedule.

kind of criticism. For Pius XII had said, "Those who deal with doctrine must express themselves in such a way, both in word and writing, that our contemporaries shall understand and listen." What could have been more natural, then, than for Teilhard to have attempted, as a paleontologist, to talk about Christian truth in the language of the evolutionist?

As for Teilhard's "ambiguities," which few are likely to deny, were they not inevitable in a life's work devoted to a unique and pioneering effort to bring together two seemingly disparate disciplines, theology and the study of evolution? How could anyone help but create—indeed, what choice was there—new words and new concepts? If the results were often muddy and elusive, at least the attempt was made—with striking and provocative results.

Yet despite the many claims that can be put forth in Teilhard's defense, it hardly requires a reactionary spirit to discern the weaknesses in his grand synthesis. To say that "Man is nothing else than evolution become conscious of itself" or that the Incarnation was a "prodigious biological operation" raises obvious theological difficulties. Nor does Teilhard's disclaimer, in *The Phenomenon of Man*, that his major work "must not be read as a work of metaphysics, still less as a sort of theological essay," really excuse one from facing the theological and philosophical overtones so readily discernible in his writings. Despite what he said, he did not write just as a scientist restricting himself to phenomenal appearances. His importance lies precisely in the fact that he did far more.

From the scientific point of view, Teilhard's work is equally open to criticism. Despite the enthusiasm of Julian Huxley, it is worth recalling that a paleontologist as eminent as George Gaylord Simpson said of *The Phenomenon of Man*, ". . . the discussion begins as a sort of mystical science and only gradually, almost imperceptibly, becomes mystical religion . . ." That was a harsh but not unfair judgment. It is hardly any gain for religion when faith and science are reconciled at the expense of giving up the exactitude and care necessary for genuine empirical science. That was the Church's mistake in the Galileo case; it is still a mistake even when the shoe is on the Teilhardian foot.

Nonetheless, despite both the theological and scientific weaknesses in Teilhard's writings, it is still distressing to see them as the subject of a *monitum*. In itself, the *monitum* is judicious and restrained and not unfair to Teilhard. It does not, however, give full credit to Teilhard's general aim to give a Christian dimension to the facts of evolution. What could be most unfortunate, opponents of Teilhard's thought could very easily seize upon the *monitum*

as an excuse to attack him far more sharply. In theology, as in war, the principle of escalation from limited skirmishes to total obliteration is an ever-present danger. The *monitum* is calm, balanced and charitable. We can only hope that those ordinaries, superiors, seminary rectors and college presidents to whom the *monitum* is specifically addressed will be equally circumspect in their response.

Still, despite the distress which the *monitum* will arouse, it is a hopeful sign to see that the Holy Office chose to issue a warning rather than an outright condemnation. Ever since the encyclical *Humani Generis* in 1950, the Church has tended to avoid the extremes of harsh personal reproof. The use of *monitums* is a healthy development, one which reflects perhaps some care to avoid the condemnatory excesses of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This seems to us a subtle but potentially important trend in the Church's necessary exercise of its teaching authority.

A Second Fourth?

FOURTH OF JULY orations are traditionally expected to be long on rhetoric and short on content. This year President Kennedy broke the rule in his talk in Philadelphia, at least as far as content is concerned, by delivering what may turn out to be a historic address.

Standing a few yards from the Liberty Bell and speaking to eighty-five thousand people in front of Independence Hall, the President called for an "Atlantic partnership" of America and Europe that would work for liberty for the entire globe. Mr. Kennedy spoke at a time when the movement toward unity in Europe is subject to severe stresses and strains, particularly as a result of President de Gaulle's efforts for an independent European force centered around France and Germany. But as far as the U. S. is concerned, President Kennedy said, "we do not regard a strong and united Europe as a rival but as a partner," and he urged our European allies to proceed with the task of "forming the more perfect union which will some day soon" permit the U. S.-European partnership to flourish.

The difficulties are many, Soviet opposition is strong, and European unity will not be easily achieved. "But," the President declared for this country, "I will say, here and now, on this day of independence, that the United States will be ready for a declaration of interdependence, that we will be prepared to discuss with a united Europe the ways and means of forming a concrete Atlantic partnership—a mutually beneficial partnership between the new union now emerging in Europe and

the old American union founded here a century and three-quarters ago."

No man alive in 1776, of course, could have anticipated the changes that have taken place in the years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the present. But we think Thomas

Jefferson and the Founding Fathers would have recognized one thing common to both the original Declaration of Independence and this new Declaration of Interdependence, one that may yet bind the West together: the determination to be free. When all is said and done, that remains the central note.

Behind the Berlin Wall

THE COMMUNISTS have won a major victory in East Germany that has gone almost unnoticed among the dark shadows cast by the Berlin wall. After a furious fight with the nation's engineers and technical planners during most of 1961, the Ulbricht regime forced adoption of a new set of Soviet industrial standards that will permit complete economic integration with Russia. This serves also as another and formidable boulder placed in the way of any future reunification of Germany.

DIN, the abbreviation for German Industrial Norms, have long been the European standards on both sides of the Iron Curtain. They are used to measure such diverse things as the tensile strength of steel, the amount of copper in telephone wires, the malleability of metals and the diameter of standard steel girders.

The Russians have developed their own system of industrial standards, known as GOST, which they have been trying to introduce in their European satellites with but mixed success. In late 1960, however, the Socialist Unity Party (SED) decided at a plenary meeting to push for introduction of GOST in East German industry. The move was one of many agreed upon as a result of a sudden drop in interzonal trade with West Germany.

Implementation of the directive proved difficult. Party officials engaged in a bitter struggle with the engineers who desperately wanted to keep the DIN standards, as much for ideological reasons as for technical ones. Adoption of GOST would obstruct any future return to DIN, driving another thick wedge between the two Germanies.

Construction of the wall speeded the Party's victory. Overnight the door to freedom, through which so many thousands of engineers and professional men had escaped, banged shut. The biggest ace held by GOST opponents—their power to flee the GDR—was knocked from their hands. Emigration of doctors, lawyers, engineers and scientists had already taken on catastrophic proportions. Shortages of trained personnel were developing everywhere and no end was in sight to the number of defectors.

Ulbricht's regime was in far more desperate straits than is generally realized. Nothing seemed to work. Concessions made to the technical intelligentsia were

vast: kid-glove treatment was the order of the day. They had priority for purchasing scarce consumer goods, cars, television sets and washing machines. They were given first crack at choice housing and their salaries were abnormally high. Nevertheless they continued to leave Ulbricht's "First German Workers and Peasants' State" in droves.

Once the wall was up, Ulbricht could begin to break the back of the engineering fraternity's opposition. The last obstacle in the way of his plans to bring his badly shaken economy into the safe harbors of Moscow planning offices had been removed. He had started on that road late in 1960 when trade with West Germany suddenly faltered and the Russians realized that integration of the Soviet Bloc under the aegis of COMECON—the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance—was not moving as fast or as effectively as planned.

COMECON has been in existence since 1949, but it was not until 1957 that the Kremlin realized the organization's potential. Creation of the Common Market posed both a threat and a challenge to the Russian leaders. For three years they pushed COMECON's development much more radically than the "inner six" did the EEC.

Two of the biggest COMECON projects are construction of an oil pipeline and a power grid. The pipeline will reach all satellite industry: one arm leading through Poland into East Germany; another to Czechoslovakia with a branch feeding Hungary. The Czech terminal at Bratislava is only forty miles from Vienna. The power grid is to link the national power net. Thus the Soviets hope to make their satellites completely dependent on Russia for these two life elixirs of industry.

In addition, the Communists planned to standardize production of industrial staples, thus doing away with waste and duplication. For example, planners hoped to develop one tractor model for production within the whole bloc. Trucks, cars, heavy machinery and spare parts were also scheduled to be parceled out to various national industries. But the scheme ran into trouble from the start. Economic nationalism is still very much alive in the Soviet bloc. Entrenched Communist bureaucrats built a paper wall against any radical changes. Even more important was the disparity

of industrial development among the nations involved. Romania and Bulgaria were too underdeveloped, Czechoslovakia and East Germany too industrially advanced, to permit the kind of cooperation the Russians had hoped to achieve.

Soviet investments in East Germany have been heavy, although they have a different character from Western-style assistance. Instead of supplying capital and machinery for development, Russian credits are granted in the form of raw materials, principally oil, with repayment in finished industrial goods. For Russia, it has proved a profitable venture. The growth of East German living standards has been slowed accordingly, although there is no denying the progress made in the past three years in furnishing the population with essentials. (Food and luxury consumer goods are another chapter, both being in short supply.) Development of the petro-chemical and plastics industries, both thriving according to Western experts in Berlin, has been based entirely on increased Russian oil deliveries.

IT IS against this background that the battle over engineering standards must be viewed. As long as German factories used DIN measurements, integration with the Soviet economy was necessarily limited. The men in charge of Moscow's planning offices could not dispose matters of production in East German factories in the same way they could in Kharkov or Kiev. But once the Party bureaucrats had cowed the engineer, the meshing of the two economies could go ahead unfettered. This is perhaps the most important development in East Germany during the past six months.

This past spring, Ulbricht delivered a secret speech to the SED Party Plenum in which he confirmed the economy's Soviet course. East German industry was going on the cost standard and nothing and nobody would stand in the way. The price the East German people would have to pay in terms of a low living standard and the unavailability of consumer goods was barely taken into account. The Russians have already begun shipment of semi-finished goods to East Germany for processing—a trend that will gain momentum before this year is out.

Meanwhile, new controls are being slapped on purchases of luxury consumer goods. The Communists had hoped to dam demands by raising prices on cars, television sets, washing machines and refrigerators. But Eastern Europe too is enjoying a modest boom, and large sums of money are passing through the hands of the new class and their satraps, money they want to spend in order to achieve a higher living standard. This year East German planners asked permission to raise prices again, but the Central Committee refused, feeling that prices had gone up too much already.

Another hike would make comparisons with the capitalist West a shade too painful and too public.

Instead, the Communists issued orders requiring every purchaser to deposit full payment for a car or TV set before having his name entered into a waiting list. And waiting periods are excessive: up to two years on a Wartburg four-door limousine, for example. The system is not new; it has been used in other satellites for some years. But its introduction in highly industrialized East Germany was an admission that industrialization was not enough, and that industry would be permitted to squeeze out only sufficient consumer goods to keep the populace in line. In addition, the new method gave planners the best estimate yet of demand for specific goods over the next two-year period.

Ulbricht put the problem bluntly in his speech when he said that production had to increase in those branches of industry "which are of decisive importance for the needs of the Soviet Union." Restraint was to be the order of the day everywhere else. "As much as we need substantially to increase investments for transportation, we will have to limit ourselves to the maintenance and modernization of existing facilities, especially as far as the Reichsbahn (the GDR railroad system) is concerned," he said. For anyone who has ever ridden Ulbricht's rickety, uncomfortable trains this is somber news.

The East Germans have set themselves a painstaking task and many years will pass before the complete integration of East Germany into the Soviet Union is an accomplished fact. But unless the current course of history changes drastically, this integration will become a reality and it will insure a Russian control of the country much stronger and more permanent than any outright annexation could ever be.

The Berlin wall was the prerequisite for any such development, for it gave the hard-pressed Ulbricht regime a chance to stabilize itself. And it has done so to a remarkable degree. The troubles, both economic and political, remain. But the fuse has been taken out of the powder keg; the way perhaps even cleared for an orderly replacement of the corrupt and dictatorial regime. Russian control of the nation is already virtually complete, despite seeming flurries of independent East German action, such as the shooting up last March of two allied military vehicles attached to the Potsdam mission. In time, the meshing will become so complete that the East German bureaucracy will benefit also, becoming the most important Party group within the bloc.

The orientation will then be completely towards the East. Political opposition within the country would become largely meaningless and the permanent division of Germany assured.

THOMAS WEYR

(Thomas Weyr is a journalist living in Vienna who writes frequently on Middle Europe.)

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The Invisible Americans

I'M NOT enough of a statistician to make a hard judgment in the matter, but I am impressed—or depressed—by the results of a monumental economic portrait of New York and its surrounding area, recently prepared by the regional office of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The average wage of this city's seven hundred thousand production workers in 1960 was \$84.36. The average hourly rate for production workers is now precisely the same as the national average, but in eleven out of nineteen industry groups, hourly earnings were less than the national average.

As I read the figures, this only confirms the evidence all around us. New York has relatively few workers in high-wage industries and a high proportion in low-wage industries. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 1959 a worker in New York with a wife and two children needed \$5,970 to maintain a "modest but adequate" standard of living. In fact, though, almost half of the city's families had a total annual income of less than \$6000 in that year. And, according to the Teamsters Council in this city, slightly less than thirty per cent of Negro and Puerto Rican families reached that level. This means that more than seventy per cent of the non-white families failed to reach the level of a "modest but adequate" standard, even in those cases in which husband and wife both worked or in which the father worked at two jobs.

Who are these people? They are, as one instance, the people who staff the restaurants and hotels, as busboys and dishwashers. They are the people who work in the city's lofts, in fly-by-night factories. They are the people who survive the heat and steam of the laundries. They are the people who labor in the charitable hospitals, but who know neither justice nor charity themselves.

These, I take it, are some of the people Michael Harrington is talking about in his recent Macmillan book, *The Other America*. They are the invisible Americans, the fellow-citizens most of us lose sight of in this affluent society. They are the people who constitute a separate subculture of misery in our nation.

I do have some doubts about certain of Mr. Harrington's figures. The poorest of the poor are all around us; I am not so sure they add up to Mr. Harrington's fifty million. But that is really not the important point. Whether the forgotten poor number thirty or forty or fifty million, they are there in scandalously large numbers, and most of us simply do not see them—primarily, I fear, because we really don't want to.

Poverty, as Mr. Harrington notes, is often off the beaten track. We ride through Pennsylvania on the turnpike; we do not see the valleys like those in Wales, with company towns which are dying now that the

mines are finished. We see the beauty of the Appalachians, but not the poor tucked away in the folds of the hills. We read about Martin Luther King, but we don't see the million Negroes in New York, or at least we don't see them in terms of poverty and what it means to family life.

We know a technological revolution is driving people off the farms, but we don't see the pockets of the once-rural in Detroit and Chicago, unable to live as they formerly did but untrained for their present situation. We know that people live longer than they used to, and perhaps we know that almost nine per cent of the population is over sixty-five; what most of us don't know is how many of the nine per cent live out their lives alone and poor, often hardly stirring from their single furnished rooms from one week to another.

These are the poor, or part of the poor, at any rate. Contrary to popular myth, most of them are not happy and carefree and lovable; they are miserable, plagued by worries and often downright mean. And, Mr. Harrington says, these are precisely the people who are most ignored when strategy is planned, reforms mapped and legislation passed.

The great social revolution of the thirties and forties came and went but it passed right by the poorest of the poor. When they are children, they are likely to go to bad schools; in any case there is nothing in their environment to encourage learning. When they are young, they work at the unskilled jobs; the unions by and large do not organize them. When they are very sick, they go to the free hospital clinics; otherwise they doctor themselves and get sicker. When the slum they live in is torn down, it hurts rather than helps them; they can't afford the "medium income" apartments that go up instead. And when they are old, all they have is Social Security, and this is not enough to support them.

Most of all, the poor have no one to speak for them. They do not belong to unions, political parties or fraternal organizations; they are without lobbies in Washington. As Mr. Harrington puts it, "they have no face; they have no voice."

Here, I think, is where Michael Harrington's book makes a solid contribution, although it is not without faults. *The Other America* addresses itself to the conscience of an affluent America; it makes poverty take on shape and sound and smell; it makes millions of Americans living in poverty suddenly visible to the too-accustomed eye. Most of all, Mr. Harrington's book speaks for the poor, consciously and eloquently, as few books in recent years have; for this he deserves not so much their thanks as ours.

JAMES O'GARA

Religion and the Court

WHEN the Supreme Court ruled that the reading of the New York State Regents' prayer was unconstitutional, it set off a national debate which is not likely to subside for some time. Some saw in the ruling a great gain for minority rights, freedom of religion, and the separation between Church and State. Others, with equal vehemence, felt that the ruling struck a major blow at American religious traditions, tended to promote secularism and sacrificed majority rights to those

of a small minority. Because of the importance of the question, The Commonwealth has asked Mr. Leo Pfeffer and Mr. William B. Ball to comment on the Court's decision. Mr. Pfeffer is Director of the Commission on Law and Social Action and General Counsel of the American Jewish Congress; Mr. Ball, a previous contributor to these pages, is Executive Director and General Counsel of the Pennsylvania Catholic Welfare Committee.

—THE EDITORS

State-Sponsored Prayer

LEO PFEFFER

SAID REPRESENTATIVE George W. Andrews of Alabama: "They put the Negroes in the schools, and now they've driven God out." Representative Andrews' grievance against the Supreme Court is more valid in respect to the decision that put the Negroes in than to the one that drove God out. The school segregation decision of 1954 expressly overruled a long-standing precedent of the Supreme Court, one going back at least to 1896. The decision outlawing the public school recitation of the New York Regents' prayer overruled no precedent, but was completely consistent with and indeed required by all the decisions in the area of the relationship of church and state handed down by the Supreme Court in the past fifteen years, ever since the Court for the first time spelled out the meaning of the First Amendment's ban on laws respecting an establishment of religion.

In 1947, in the *Everson* school bus decision, the Court defined the meaning of the establishment clause of the First Amendment in the following words:

"The 'establishment of religion' clause of the First Amendment means at least this: Neither a state nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another. Neither can force nor influence a person to go to or remain away from church against his will or force him to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion. No person can be punished for entertaining or professing religious beliefs or disbeliefs, for church attendance or non-attendance. No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, what-

ever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion. Neither a state nor the Federal Government can, openly or secretly, participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups and *vice versa*. In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect 'a wall of separation between church and state.'"

If anything can be said to be settled in constitutional law, it is that the First Amendment's no establishment clause means what this paragraph says it means. Of the nine Justices who constituted the Court in 1947 when this paragraph was written, only two, Black and Douglas, participated in the Regents' prayer decision. Yet every person who sat on the Court since it was written has in one case or another indicated his approval of the principles set forth in this interpretation of the First Amendment.

WHAT the Court said in the *Everson* case was that the Amendment imposes upon the federal and state governments in the United States a mandate of neutrality not only as among competing faiths, but between religion and non-religion. It may use its instrumentalities neither to aid religion nor to injure it. In short, government in the United States is secular and its powers may be employed only to further secular ends. The Preamble to the Constitution sets forth the purposes for which the new republic on the Western hemisphere was established, and all the purposes listed are secular: form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty.

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In its effectuation of its secular purposes, governmental action may, as an incidental by-product, benefit religion—indeed, one would assume that this would generally be so—and that fact, the Court has consistently held, does not restrict government in the manner in which it carries out those purposes. Thus, as in the *Everson* case, a state may effectuate the secular purpose of protecting children from the hazards of traffic by paying for their transportation to schools, parochial as well as public. This is constitutional even though an incidental by-product is relieving the parochial schools of a substantial part of their budgetary obligations. (Those who disagree with the *Everson* decision do not quarrel with the underlying principle. They contend that the purpose of school bus legislation is not to protect children but to help finance what has become a necessary part of the school budget.)

So, too, a state in operating its secular school system may adjust its schedule to meet the needs of its students, including their religious needs. Also, in furthering the secular purpose of assuring to every person at least one day's rest in seven, the state may require businesses to close down on Sundays even though the Christian religion, or that part of it which observes Sunday as the Sabbath, may obtain an incidental benefit. (Here, again, those who disagree with the majority decisions in the New York released-time case and the Sunday Law cases quarrel not with the principle but with the application.)

Where, however, the state's purpose is exclusively or primarily religious rather than secular, its violation of the First Amendment is clear and hardly disputable. Therefore, the Court held in the *McCollum* case, a state may not introduce religious instruction into the public school, for it is thereby employing a state instrumentality to further a religious purpose. For the same reason, the Court unanimously held last year, a state may not require applicants for public office to take an oath that they believe in the existence of God.

When, therefore, the Regents' prayer case came before the Court, even Representative Andrews should have realized that a decision outlawing state-sponsored prayer recitation was inevitable, unless the Court overruled all the decisions since the *Everson* case and abrogated the principles set forth in that case. For there could hardly be any question that the purpose of the Regents, who are state officials, was exclusively religious. To leave no doubt about their intentions, the Regents, in formulating the prayer in 1951 and calling for its daily recitation in the public schools, issued a "policy statement" in which it said that thereby each of the children "will be properly prepared to follow the faith of his or her father, as he or she receives the same at mother's knee or father's side and as such faith is expounded and strengthened by his or her religious leaders."

What this policy statement lacks in elegance of style it makes up in innocent clarity of expression. Nor did John F. Brosnan, a member of the Board of Regents, conceal his motivation when he charged, in an address before the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, that the only criticism of the proposal "came from those who do not believe in God."

Regent Brosnan was thereby assigning to the ranks of the atheists many who would be rather surprised to find themselves there, including, for example, the editors of the *Christian Century*, who opposed the proposal as ineffectual, and the leaders of the Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer in Peekskill who called the Regents' formulation "not a prayer but an abomination and a blasphemy" because Christ's name had been deliberately omitted.

THIS easy identification of opposition to government-sponsored religion with opposition to religion was echoed and re-echoed in the stridency of the reaction to the Court's decision outlawing the Regents' program. What is particularly disturbing is that so much of it should come from high-placed Catholic sources, for the Catholics in America have themselves been the victim of this same type of defamation. When, for example, in 1869, the Catholic community of Cincinnati under the leadership of Archbishop Purcell vigorously opposed Bible reading in the public schools of that city, a Protestant minister asked passionately: "If we raise the flag on the school house, shall the Star Spangled Banner be entwined with the black flag of atheism?"

Those who are committed to a secular public school system—and this, I think, encompasses the overwhelming majority of Americans—owe a great debt of gratitude to the Catholic Church and the Catholic community. No factor was more important in the secularization of American public education than the loyalty, courage and perseverance of Catholic parents who, at the urgings of their priests, fought in the courts and forum of public opinion the numerous religious practices that permeated the public schools in the 19th century. From Ellsworth, Maine, where the Jesuit priest John Bapst was tarred and feathered for opposing Bible reading in the public schools, down to Louisiana, where Catholics joined with Jews and non-believers in supporting a successful suit to outlaw Bible reading and recitation of the Lord's Prayer in the public schools, Catholics fought for the elimination of religious practices from the public schools. It was not so many years ago that I myself received the full cooperation and support of the Catholic Church authorities, including the furnishing of Catholic plaintiffs, in a suit which I successfully prosecuted to prevent the distribution of the Gideon Bible in the public schools of Rutherford, New Jersey.

What has happened to make the Catholic Church so

bitterly condemn today what it so ardently espoused yesterday? It would be terrifying indeed if the explanation is to be found in the behavior of Tertullian, who, when Christianity was oppressed, pleaded that "It is a fundamental human right, a privilege of nature, that every man should worship according to his own convictions," and that "One man's religion neither helps nor harms another person," but when Christianity was forging to the ascendancy asserted that "Heretics may properly be compelled, not enticed to duty. Obstinacy must be corrected, not coerced."

The early Christians were condemned as atheists because of the assumption that opposition to the state-sponsored Roman religion was equivalent to opposition to religion. Today many of their descendants condemn as atheists those who support the Supreme Court's decision outlawing state-sponsored prayer. In his opinion, Justice Black sought, apparently without success, to avoid this by asserting that nothing could be more wrong than the argument that to apply the Constitution in such a way as to prohibit state laws respecting an establishment of religious services in public schools is to indicate hostility towards religion or towards prayer. "It is neither sacrilegious nor anti-religious," he said, "to say that each separate government in this country should stay out of the business of writing or sanctioning official prayers and leave that purely religious function to the people themselves and to those the people choose to look to for religious guidance."

STATE-SANCTIONED prayer has a long and ignoble history, from the early days of persecuted Christianity in Rome to the twentieth century in Russia when the Jews were compelled to recite in synagogue every Sabbath a prayer for the welfare of the Tsarist government that instigated and encouraged terrible pogroms against them. It was not so long ago that England experienced

an event which illustrated vividly that state sponsorship of prayer is not beneficial but harmful to religion and conscience. In 1927 the Church of England wished to revise the Anglican Prayer Book. Since it is the established church, it could not do so without approval by Parliament. In that year and again in the following year, it petitioned Parliament to permit the change but in each year the proposal was rejected by the House of Commons because it was felt that the proposed revisions manifested too much Roman Catholic influence. The result is that for the past thirty-five years Anglicans have been praying in a manner which does not fully accord with their conscience only because the government possesses the power to formulate prayer.

The lesson of history is clear. It supports fully the statement in the Court's opinion in the Regents' prayer case that the First Amendment "rested on the belief that a union of government and religion tends to destroy government and degrade religion," that "whenever government had allied itself with one particular form of religion, the inevitable result had been that it had incurred the hatred, disrespect and even contempt of those who held contrary beliefs," and that "many people had lost their respect for any religion that had relied upon the support of government to spread its faith."

It was for that reason that the deeply religious fathers of our Constitution wrote a Preamble which carefully refrained from listing among the purposes of government any power or obligation to promote religious ends and deliberately kept out of the Constitution itself not only any prayer or invocation to God but even any mention of God at all. The decision of the Supreme Court in outlawing public school recitation of prayer is consistent not only with its own prior decisions but with the intent of the founders of our republic and with the cause of religious liberty.

The Forbidden Prayer

WILLIAM B. BALL

PERHAPS more things have been wrought by the School Prayer decision than the Supreme Court dreams of. But both too little and too much are now being claimed respecting its meaning. On the one hand, it is being argued that the decision is limited in its effect not merely to prayers, or to prayers sponsored in the schools by government, but indeed solely to prayers

composed by government. On the other hand, it is being seriously contended that the decision at a single stroke reaches not only religious practices in the schools, but all "official" religious practices—and indeed non-religious endeavors in education and social welfare merely because conducted by church institutions.

Neither claim appears correct. The decision goes far

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beyond the outlawing of prayers composed by government. Primarily it involves neither the fact that a prayer was "composed" nor the fact that government officials—rather than, say, the Lord—did the composing. What the Court struck down was "religious exercises" or "religious practices" in the public schools. It did not attack the New York religious exercise because it was a prayer, but the New York prayer because it was a religious exercise. As the majority opinion of Justice Black noted, it was the fact that the prayer program "officially establishes religious beliefs" which rendered it, in the Court's view, **unconstitutional**.

The decision therefore directly reaches other public school exercises and practices which are primarily religious in nature. This is not to predict that the Court will, in further "religious exercise" cases, follow the logic of its premise in *Engel*. The coming upon the Court of new members, or perhaps even the consciousness of present members that the broad premise they stated in *Engel* is unacceptable to most citizens, may produce the kind of retreat from that premise which the Court executed so notably and so nimbly in The Second Released Time Case. But that would be a *retreat*—a change from the position now plainly taken by the Court. To say that the Court may one day change its position will doubtless raise hopes and lower blood pressures, but it does not alter by a jot the doctrine which has been now written into our law by six Supreme Court justices.

What, however, of the claims of those who assert that the *Engel* decision "makes it clear" that federal funds may not be used to finance parochial school education? In spite of the breadth of its interpretation of the First Amendment, there is nothing in the majority opinion to support this view. The case dealt with religious practices in the secular schools, not with secular activities in religious schools—a matter vastly different. Of course, the nation will have its ears dinned with quotes out of context from the opinion (with the Douglas concurrence blown up to awesome size), all designed to get people saying: "The Supreme Court has ruled out any aid to parochial education." But this will be the pronouncement, not of the Court, but of propaganda—of myriad efforts at influencing opinion through popular articles, conferences, news releases, panels, forums, policy statements, law journal studies. And this, it should be remembered, is a game at which all can play, and if a more gross myth of "absolute" separation of religion from public life is not to be imposed upon the nation, it will behoove many more people to start playing this eminently democratic game.

EXTREME interpretations of the decision to one side, how should it be regarded? Is it a "resounding blow struck for liberty"? Is it an "attack upon religious freedom"? I think that the case cannot be understood with-

out a comprehension of its most central problem: *the meaning of the term "religion" in the Constitution*.

Both the Court in its decision, and the commentators since the decision, have failed to deal with this issue which is plainly the heart of the matter—and of a good many other matters in the tortured field of church-state relations today. Justice Jackson years ago in the *Barnette* (flag salute) case said: "If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein." Yet plainly this ideal formulation is only partly realizable in the education of the young—a thing which the Court in the desegregation cases calls "the very foundation of good citizenship." The introducing of "orthodoxies" is inevitable—not merely the narrow orthodoxy of telling Rupert that he must not poke Agnes but broader orthodoxies pertaining to virtues generally, and to law, country, society and world. Without these value-expressions a teacher could not teach that Naziism was evil, that the U.N. is good, that racial discrimination, thievery and vandalism are bad—or even keep order in the classroom.

But at least some of these value-expressions now appear to constitute *religion* in the constitutional sense. A year ago in the *Torcaso* case Mr. Justice Black, speaking for a unanimous Court, cautioned us that the term "religion," as used in the First Amendment, comprehended not only theistic but non-theistic religions, and among the latter he mentioned Ethical Culture and Secular Humanism. The point was vigorously pressed by plaintiffs in the *Engel* case that Ethical Culture although non-theistic is generally considered a religion. But the Ethical Culture Movement describes its doctrinal base principally in terms of "belief in the worth of the individual," "encouraging freedom of thought" and as being "committed to the democratic ideal and method, issuing in social action." This doctrine is the religion which the religion of Ethical Culture teaches. And not only sects, it should be noted, but their doctrines, have been considered by the Court—since the *Everson* case in 1947—to come within the purview of the no establishment clause of the Constitution.

As Justice Black noted in *Engel*, the mischief he saw in the prayer was the fact that it "officially establishes religious beliefs." "Religious," then, must now be understood to comprise not only theism but the doctrinal corpus of Secular Humanism and Ethical Culture, while "beliefs" specifies that it is the establishing of attitudes toward these matters religious which is the constitutionally objectionable feature of the prayer program and must logically be the objectionable feature of any other form of religious program.

Worship, of course, tends to establish religious beliefs. And a cultural course (e.g., History of Method-

ism) could too, depending upon how it was taught. But preceptive training (e.g., the widely prevalent courses and permeations on Intergroup Understanding or Problems of Democracy, when expressing values, or an oughtness) is obviously the most potent form of "religion" in the schools because it brings into play the full instructional panoply of teaching, information and persuasion and directs the pupil's attitude toward life and society. And indeed, as has often been observed, even the ideologically "neutral" public school (one with no reminders of God and no socio-ethical courses) is nonetheless by the very fact of its silences a potent value-inculcator.

It therefore seems clear that if a public school may not teach (whether through prayer or otherwise) the fatherhood of God, neither may it teach the brotherhood of man. It cannot establish Secular Humanism if it must oust Christian Humanism. Orthodoxies are orthodoxies. Religion is religion. Is this to suggest that we should all now embrace the Test Case Way of Life and commence litigating secular-values programs out of the public schools? It is rather to point out the bankruptcy to which legal perfectionism, one-hundred-percent pressure tactics and a fictional history of disestablishment have now led us.

The truth of the matter is that the schools cannot and should not avoid orthodoxies, and the question is not one of keeping orthodoxies out but of deciding which shall be allowed in. The Court, in this loosely conceived opinion, has most certainly not thought through the logic of its presuppositions. While there has been officially stimulated in our public schools the teaching of the democratic ethic, there is nothing like the demand for this which exists almost universally for some formal reminder of God in these schools.

Must both now be eliminated? Yes, if the First Amendment is to be interpreted in terms of historically unsupportable absolutes which bear no real relation to social reality and the most profound aspirations of the people. But the history of our constitutional jurisprudence has not, on the whole, been one of abstractions and mechanical absolutes. Justices Black and Douglas to the contrary, the First Amendment guaranty of free-

dom of speech, for example, has never been deemed to confer an *absolute* freedom of utterance. The Constitution has no life apart from the society in which it lives. This is not to suggest that majorities make right. It is to say that, in deciding questions under the broad terms of the First Amendment, a consensus in the community should be taken into account, along with the question of whether the effecting of that consensus involves real injury to anyone.

No such injury appeared in this case. None was discovered by the trial court which heard the testimony. Though the Supreme Court is now being eulogized in some quarters for having supposedly rectified a grievous injury wrought upon the plaintiffs by the New York statute and for having restored to them their freedom of belief, these are points which nowhere are stressed in the Supreme Court decision. Justice Douglas, in fact, stated flatly that there was "no element of compulsion or coercion" to be found in the New York program. This was not a case of violated rights. It was one of an asserted deviation by New York from a non-existent constitutional standard. It was a matter the Supreme Court need never have taken on for review and which it should not have in view of the fact that its resolution of the abstract question could endanger—and did in fact violate—a widespread practice deeply rooted in the character and traditions of the people.

WHAT WILL the effects of the decision be? At least three appear rather clearly in prospect. The broadly written majority opinion will be used in the effort further to press for the elimination of all orthodoxies, save secularism, from every remaining aspect of religion in American public life. But whether prayers in Congress or the official use of "In God We Trust" are ever really declared unconstitutional seems to me of relatively small consequence. The area of supreme importance—that of education—has now been declared out of bounds to any form of theistic value-inculcation or worship. It has been said that the prayer was, after all, a mere symbol and of no real religious value. But it is not correct to minimize the psychological effect of the prayer. The symbol was the symbol of the presence of God in the lives of predominantly Protestant school children and as such was a matter of incalculable importance.

Secondly, there is bound to come about a new public excitement over the judicial process; over the question of who is able to get before the Supreme Court and upon the basis of what standing; over the responsibility of the Court in opinion-writing. Already, editorials are appearing with headlines decrying the fact that "Six Justices Dictate to the Nation." By an incredibly loose opinion in which no relationships to judicial precedents are bothered with and in which six justices insistently refer to the early Madison as "the Founding Fathers,"



the Court has indeed begged for angry denunciation. But this should give us no satisfaction. It is the duty of the justices—few though they are—to settle great questions for the entire nation, and one of the dangers encountered by poor decisions such as *Engel* is that the Court-as-institution will come to be held in popular contempt.

Thirdly, the decision is already producing significant harm to intergroup relations. Although the Court expressed fear of the divisive effect of the prayer program, it seemed oblivious to the divisive effect of its decision banning the prayer program. Undoubtedly, a factor contributing to resentment of the decision is the expectable feeling that something is “not quite democratic,” when the will of the majority is frustrated by court action. But this feeling has been given emphasis in Church-State relations by remarks such as counsel for a “defense” group once made to me, that “We’ll blacklist every town we can find which carries on offensive religious practices like Nativity displays. We’ll find plaintiffs. We’ll bring suits. We’ll provide expert counsel. The national office will run the show.”

I understood the fear and the memory of fear which was the driving force behind his program. But I could not help but observe that he was preoccupied, not with what even he deemed to be actual injustices (comparable, for instance, to racial segregation) but principally the failure of society to conform its mores and institu-

tions *perfectly*, to the last particular, to his singular vision of an ideally “secure” society. Would his fears, I wondered, ever be calmed? (I could not but mark his hostility to the very existence of parochial schools.) Could statutes and court decrees—even with their admitted educative potential—do the job he wanted? And were the institutions and practices which he attacked *really* as divisive and dangerous from *his* point of view as he claimed? Or did they, perhaps, offer ultimate safeguards to him which would ultimately be lacking in the secularist society he so obviously and ardently sought?

AT ANY RATE, we now have the *Engel* decision, and following *Engel*, a number of groups have announced brand new test case dockets. And we can now expect a tidal wave of litigations against “official” religious practices. At least so far as religious practices in the public schools go, the Supreme Court has apparently written all interested pressure groups a stack of blank checks. But when the checks are all cashed and the victories all won, as little may be left of interreligious goodwill in the U.S.A. as Sherman left of Georgia. The wall of separation will have been raised to awesome new heights—the wall, that is, between group and group.

That unfortunate fact may in the end prove to be the principal effect of the Case of the Forbidden Prayer.

The Wooden Mirror

JOHN LOGAN

I wait beside the fount.
My God whispers in the box
where a fellow sinner still confesses.
Again my mind caresses,
with my hand, the iron fence
that protects or that ornaments,
out of art, caution, or some
paradigmatic wisdom,
the dish kept for our baptism.
I had forgot this fount
has eightsides of highly rubbed wood,
each with a gothic arch in relief
leading nowhere
but to my own natural face
shadowed in its mirror.
Yet I could not forget
between these trips, as grace
wings more niggardly
(or simply goes)
this pressed, iron rose
black as the hope of the melancholy
brother of our sins, who spent

all his gorgeous coins of light—
and heavy as a body
whirled through the dark
outer petals of our world.
The voice of the father
a little louder
as he absolves inside his cell
is like the gentle dripping of a waterfall.
God this grill is tall as I!
This oaken pedestal and base
as many faced.
See the brass opening in the wood
where the priest may turn his ancient key?
The line of penitents shifts
to me. Ah Christ I know this shut,
double locked fount
is like the hidden basin of my heart
inside its guard of ribs and skin.
Bless me father for I have sinned
against love,
and now, near middle age,
hang guilty on the rods of my own cage.

Failures—Lay and Clerical

WILLIAM J. NAGLE

MY CONTENTION is that Catholic laymen have failed miserably in their work of bringing Christ—God Incarnate—into the world. And I submit that a large part of the reason for that failure is that they have not understood their role in the Church.

The liturgy remains the best example of this failure. All of the recent liturgical reforms are aimed at getting the layman back to his rightful role in the Mass—fully participating, fully understanding, fully worshipping. This cannot, of course, be done overnight. The basic action of the Mass, the interaction of love, has been encrusted over, obscured, for centuries. Now the crust is being removed, and lay people are again emerging as that *plebs sancta*, that consecrated people of which the Canon of the Mass speaks. We still have a long way to go, of course, but the significant fact is that in principle at least the place of the layman in worship has been recognized.

In practice, however, we in the United States have been slow in embracing these reforms. Why? In part the lag may be due to a somewhat narrow, overly conservative outlook on the part of many of our Bishops and priests, who have not themselves kept up with the liturgical studies that have formed the bases for these recent reforms. But if blame must be placed, we would have to admit that laymen have also not done their part. They have not greeted these reforms with any great enthusiasm, and they have not urged their pastors to follow Rome's lead.

Laymen as well as clerics must be prepared to do a substantial amount of studying if they are to appreciate fully what is happening in the Church today, in this matter of the Church's worship and many other things. Only if the layman becomes knowledgeable about his role will he be able to articulate his desires, for the vernacular or anything else, to his pastor, to his Bishop, to church officials in Rome. And there is certainly no point in encouraging laymen to be more articulate if they are not knowledgeable.

The need for knowledge is not the only problem. According to Yves Congar, there is a sense in which the

layman up to fairly recent times can be said to have been a proletarian in the Church—at least in the way that Arnold Toynbee uses the word. A proletarian, says Toynbee, is not made by being in a subordinate condition, but by living in a society of which he does not himself feel to be organically an active member with his own rights. Laymen seem now to be on their way to becoming organically active members again, by right and by fact. But in the ecclesiastical, institutional structure—in what for want of a better term we might refer to as Church government—the layman has a long distance to travel if he is to obtain even some of the rights he had in the Church in earlier centuries.

The fact, I think, is that our present means for developing and channeling public opinion in the Church are quite inadequate. Indeed, at this stage there is a positive lack of public opinion in the Church; lay people simply do not articulate their thoughts and desires, and a serious lack of communication exists between the laity and the hierarchy in this country.

THE POINT can perhaps be best illustrated by example. There has been so little discussion within the Church between laymen, priests and Bishops about the whole basis of the Catholic school system that when a serious public policy issue arose over aid to Catholic schools the Bishops did not in fact speak for a substantial number of laymen. Thus, whatever the Bishops thought, in the last session of Congress all the Catholic Democrats in the Senate except two voted for the President's school bill. These Senators (and significantly large numbers of other Catholic laymen) were apparently not in agreement with the recommendation of the Chairman of the NCWC Administrative Board that we oppose any education bill that did not include aid to Catholic schools.

I cite this matter here only to point up the fact that on this most important issue—which touches in some way the lives of practically all of the Catholics in the U.S.—there has not been sufficient discussion within the Church. When the issue arose publicly, the Bishops who spoke could hardly do so out of a consensus of the Catholic citizenry; no consensus had been formed because the discussion, debate and thought required for forming a consensus had not taken place.

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During the school aid debate many Catholic spokesmen stressed the fact that the primary responsibility for their children's education belongs to the parent, not to the state. The point is an important one, but the state is not the only agency in need of this reminder. If it is the parents who have the primary responsibility, the faculties in our Catholic schools teach by their delegation. It would seem, then, that the thoughts and opinions of the parents about the way their parish schools are run, about the policies of a diocesan education office, or the national education policies of NCWC are very much in order.

I cite the need for public opinion within the Church on this matter of education, not simply because of its topicality as a public issue but because I think it is over the whole issue of education that Catholic lay people in the United States are most likely to begin to express their opinions. It is also one of the issues over which they seem most frustrated.

THE LACK of communication between lay people and the hierarchy is similarly evident in another crucial area. To state my point as frankly and honestly as I can: I see very little evidence that our Bishops and priests realize that for the vast majority of Catholic married couples the most serious moral problems revolve around the questions of rhythm and birth control.

These couples are not asking the Bishops for permission to use artificial contraceptives; they would ask (if they would only speak out) that the hierarchy and Catholic universities and medical schools do all that is scientifically possible to make rhythm more workable. On the theoretical level, married couples would ask theologians to devote more attention to the theology of marriage; they would ask Bishops, theologians and philosophers to take a more careful look at our natural law argument against contraceptives.

Monsignor Irving DeBlanc, formerly director of NCWC's Family Life Bureau, has cited a study by a North Carolina statistician which indicated that Catholic married couples use contraceptive methods of birth control about as often as non-Catholics. Whatever the accuracy of his figures, can we say that the remaining percentage—whether it be fifty per cent, thirty per cent, or seventy per cent—are not using contraceptives because they are convinced such use is against the natural law?

I have taken no scientific polls, but my guess would be that the majority of American Catholic married couples who are not practicing birth control are simply following the direction of the Church rather than any strong conviction about the validity of the natural law argument. These Catholic couples are practicing rhythm—and are having more children—because, as commonly articulated, the Church says rhythm is morally acceptable under certain conditions and contra-

ceptives are not morally acceptable under any conditions.

Let me make myself quite clear. I am not questioning the basic validity of the natural law argument on birth control. I am suggesting that the mere repetition of formulas stated centuries ago is not very convincing, and I find somewhat puzzling the head-in-the-sand posture of Catholic moralists on this question. Even in its most imperfect present form, rhythm could be presented in a positive way—as a means to sanctity, instead of with the usual negative approach of implying that if a couple is not perfect enough to rely completely on the providence of God, they are *permitted* to use rhythm.

I said I saw very little evidence that our Bishops and priests realize that the most serious moral problems for the vast majority of Catholic married couples revolve around the questions of rhythm and birth control. That may seem a strong statement, but how else can we explain the fact that in recent years leading Catholic universities have turned down foundation grants for study on rhythm and population control on the ground that the subject is “too controversial”? How else can we explain the fact that our priests and Bishops, by and large, have similarly ignored the problem, although sociologists warn us that birth control is one of the major sources of leakage from the Church?

Marriage, I fear, was largely given over to the canonists some centuries ago; only in our own age are theologians beginning to realize that marriage is the means through which most men gain their salvation, and even now progress in this area often seems slow and halting. What I am trying to stress is that laymen have not received the kind of theological and moral guidance on these most important questions that they need to sanctify themselves, their families and the world, and—more to the point here—they have not been insistent enough in asking for that guidance.

SOME MONTHS AGO, Bishop Jan van Dodewaard of Haarlem, The Netherlands, urged laymen “to stimulate or even to press Catholic theologians to give their full attention to questions which urgently call for solution.” And this is the point: we cannot simply sit back as disgruntled proletarians. We must communicate with our Bishops, with our theologians. And if the channels of communication sometimes seem to be disconnected on the other end, we have to keep on until we are sure Churchmen are listening and understanding. This is not simply our right—it is our duty.

I am convinced that unless we Catholic laymen understand and begin to fulfill our role in the Church we shall not be prepared to fulfill our role in temporal society either.

As Canon Leclercq writes: “What the Christian social movement has lacked has been laymen ‘taking the temporal order seriously,’ that is, applying their

minds to the social problem in its own right. There have been a few such men, but they lacked the religious formation which would have enabled them to approach secular questions from an inherently Christian point of view. . . . The good Christian has always had the impression that he was not a fully satisfactory follower of Christ if he took the temporal order with absolute seriousness and that he who did so was only a lukewarm Christian. It seemed that no one could be both wholly Christian and wholly lay."

The fact is that the Christian function of the layman is determined by his situation in the world, that is, by his natural commitment to the work of the world, which we do not give up in order to serve God's kingdom. We give glory to God not by withholding ourselves from that work but precisely in it and through it. Christ lives in the world, is present in the world, in and through us.

Yves Congar makes the necessary point forcefully when he says: "At bottom, forgetfulness of the true role of lay people leads both to clericalism in the Church, and to laicism in the world. Pastorally, clericalism results in this, that lay people, kept in subjection and passivity in the Church, are not formed for their own Christian responsibilities, which it is their business to discharge in the world and in the course of history." Only that layman can fill his role well who is informed, who is fully aware of the requirements of the Christian conscience, who reacts spontaneously not as a sectarian Catholic but as a fully formed person filled with Christ.

For the most part the lead in those areas concerned with justice and charity in the social and political order has been taken by secularists; for the most part Catholic laymen (though we now number more than forty million) have not taken the lead. Pope Pius XII urged laymen to show courage, the courage of initiative. As Congar says, lay people have the right and the duty to become "adult Christians, free men," and the adult "is a man who no longer has to be warned, encouraged, supervised in order that he may act." When are we going to stop looking over our shoulders for direction from our priests? When are we going to act like adults?

I WOULD end with two points. The first is that in this whole area of the layman in the Church and the world we must realize that we are in an early stage of development. Most of the books specifically addressed to the subject have been published only in the last six years, and there is yet to be an American book on the subject. At this stage it seems to me that the role of the individual layman is much clearer than that of Catholic organizations.

Following the direction of Popes Pius XI and Pius XII on the subject of Catholic Action, we now generally speak of Catholic Action as the "collaboration of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy"—that is,

some group acting under a specific mandate from the Bishop to promote some specific religious end of the Bishop's apostolate. We speak of the "organized lay apostolate" as engaging in activities deriving from "the mission of the Church," and this lay apostolate is by definition lay directed. However, the difficulty is that many of our lay organizations—some of them founded years ago before any such distinctions were understood or even made—have a schizoid character; they seem, because of some tie to the Bishop or chancery office, to be Catholic Action groups, while some of their activities and ends are more definitely in the province of the lay apostolate.

On this and similar questions, and indeed on the whole question of the layman in the Church, the Second Vatican Council might lead to further definition. Meanwhile, we must recognize that some of the strains connected with the striving of the layman for his rightful status in the Church are appearing first in certain lay organizations, and that this strain is probably inevitable in a transitional stage such as this one.

My second and final point is directed not to the question of lay organizations and the confusion surrounding them at the present time, but to laymen as individuals. It must be realized that there is something of an "occupational hazard" incurred when one reads in this field and involves himself deeply in these very fundamental questions about his place in the Church and his role as a Catholic layman in society. Here I would express a personal warning: dipping only slightly into the literature in this area may lead to a considerable degree of frustration as one comes to realize that there does exist a gap—and for the time, I fear, a growing gap—between the educated laity and the clergy.

I sense in the United States at this point the growth of a new anti-clericalism. It does not have the secular roots of the anti-clericalism of the Continent. Its source is rather in the frustration, the disenchantment, the disillusionment of many lay Catholics who have somewhere caught a glimpse of what the Church should be and of what they should be in the Church, and who are now painfully aware of the gap between the ideal and the reality.

As a result of this situation, what might be termed the "deinstitutionalized Catholic" has become quite common among educated laymen. Such a Catholic is one who goes to Mass and the Sacraments but who has retreated from "involvement" in the institutional Church or even in Catholic organizations. To my mind, the increase of "deinstitutionalized Catholics" among the very laymen who should be leaders presents one of the most serious problems facing the Church in the United States. And I consider the problem especially serious because I see very little evidence that our ecclesiastical leaders are even aware it exists.

THE SCREEN

Rat-a-tat-tat

IF ONE looks closely at "Professor" Harold Hill, the super salesman played with such enthusiasm by Robert Preston in "The Music Man" (Warners), he will discover that the phony professor is related to the declining harness seller, who was also played by Preston in the movie version of "The Dark at the Top of the Stairs," and to Willy Loman, the not-so-super salesman whose life and death were so vividly described by Arthur Miller. Without a willingness to face reality, these salesmen lived on pipe dreams. The main difference between Harold Hill and the other two lies in Harold's ability to sell his dreams and make people think they are getting something for their money. And perhaps his customers in Meredith Willson's musical comedy are getting what they pay for.

A song at the beginning of "The Music Man" makes it clear why other 1912 salesmen are jealous of Harold who "sells clarinets to the kids in the town, with the big trombone, and the rat-a-tat drums, and the big brass bass. . . . He lives like a king and he dallies and he gathers and he plucks. . . . And when the man dances, the piper pays him. Yes, sireeee." And Robert Preston, who originated the role on the stage, plays it to perfec-

tion in the movie. Perhaps the Technicolor camera isn't always kind to him in the close-ups, but Preston's *joie de vivre* and energy are endless and contagious; and he practically carries the whole movie.

As a con-man who takes over an Iowa town, he fast-talks and sweet-talks. He doesn't know one note from another, but he sure can sell musical instruments and all their trimmings. He quickly wins over the mayor's wife who leads the dancing class and is played by Hermione Gingold in all her flamboyance; and he convinces the Board of Education, portrayed by the Buffalo Bills who form a quartet and sing "Lida Rose." He has a little more trouble with the mayor (Paul Ford) and the pretty librarian (Shirley Jones), but after accepting advice from his friend (Buddy Hackett), the "Prof" whips them into line by spell-binding Shirley's cute little lisping brother (Ronny Howard). After all, who can resist Robert Preston, especially when he sings the irresistible "76 Trombones"?

But if one looks closely at "The Music Man," and perhaps one shouldn't, he realizes that except for Robert Preston and "76 Trombones," there isn't very much to the movie. Meredith Willson's music is mildly pleasant when Shirley Jones sings "Till There Was You" and admits bells started to ring when Harold showed up. While Morton DaCosta's production occasionally catches the feel of 1912 Iowa, his picture is rather old-fashioned and stodgy; this is due to the fact that DaCosta also directed, and his direction lacks the imagination and verve to keep up with Preston and the ebullient trombone march. Furthermore, the picture runs much too long; and its thin story and static, theater-tied direction make it seem longer.

No doubt there's something to be said in favor of the film's theme that Harold Hill isn't all cheat and faker; even he brings some joy into drab lives. As Arthur Miller put it: a salesman has to dream. "It comes with the territory." And perhaps we, too, need some dreams and escape in our lives. But I wonder if "The Music Man" itself isn't one of Harold's pipe dreams to sell us a bill of goods, an entertainment that isn't really there.

A MUCH different kind of dreamer is the main character in "The Important Man" (Lopert), a Mexican picture that is a kind of modern morality play. The film was beautifully photographed in Oaxaca, and set in a village where the local priest selects a major-domo every year to be head man at a festival, a position of importance requiring some responsibility and considerable money. The town drunk, a mean, superstitious and ignorant fellow who neglects his family to gamble and chase a prostitute, wants more than anything else to be this important man. The role is played to the hilt by Toshiro Mifune, the famous Japanese actor whom you may remember in "Rashomon," "The Seven Samurai," and as the Japanese Macbeth in "Throne of Blood."

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While his exaggerated acting style contrasts considerably with the Mexican cast around him, Mifune succeeds admirably in portraying a human wreck who still has strength and grace to strive to become a man. Perhaps producer-director Ismael Rodriguez spends too much time showing this lowly peasant at his worst (the film is not designed for the young or sensitive); but the final scenes, after the priest, insisting that nobody is wholly bad, makes this sinner the major-domo, are extremely moving. "The Important Man" may wear you out, but its basic theme merits attention.

ALSO ABOUT a dreaming rebel is "Lonely Are the Brave" (Universal), a western that is in a class by itself as westerns go. Set in 1953 New Mexico, its script, very well written by Dalton Trumbo from Edward Abbey's *Brave Cowboy*, concerns a liberty-loving cowboy who hates fences of any kind. He goes to Duke City to help

a friend who has been thrown into jail for helping wetbacks; and the first step in his ill-planned campaign is to get drunk and involved in a vicious fight—so he too lands in the clink. But nothing good comes of this. His friend refuses to escape with him. So the cowboy runs alone. And the rest of the picture is a chase affair—with a jeep, walkie-talkie and truck as the enemy.

Under David Miller's thoughtful direction, this chase proves tremendously exciting, and the two lead roles are superbly played by Kirk Douglas, as the cowboy whose heart, if not his head, is in the right place, and Walter Matthau, as the compassionate sheriff who leads the pursuit. For a while it looks as if Douglas will outsmart his pursuers and their modern devices, but a crowded four-lane highway proves his Waterloo. This is an interesting and well-made movie; and its moral, if any, is that modern dreamer-rebels must face reality in this world of fences. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

BOOKS

The Beginning of Wisdom or the Edge of Despair

Island of Women. By Juan Goytisolo. Knopf. \$3.50.

Villa Milo. By Xavier Domingo. Braziller. \$4.

by Alice Ellen Mayhew

TWENTY-FIVE years after, two books by Spanish writers of the succeeding generation have described their bankrupt inheritance in a land whose fires (for them) have gone out; the war changed nothing, the rich came out of their burrows, the poor remained miserable and indecisive. Very different in temperament, both writers take a harsh, perhaps one-sided view, and they have chosen their characters and settings to illustrate the peculiar Latin *angst* of society and individuals at a metaphysical dead-end. In *Villa Milo* especially, because it is a sustained metaphor in novel form, the subject is the possibility of salvation, and mysticism. One of the characters sighs, not without a certain humor, "How I wish I were an adolescent, *nordic* for example, a simple, ignorant man." (Italics mine)

What marks these books as peculiarly Spanish is the background of violence always giving way to false calm: one day burn down the churches, next day worship in them.

"Actually, every country has the kind of government it deserves." (*Island of Women*) "... all Spain is like this town: a way of looking at the world, ... a cowardly way of protecting itself and yet doing nothing. ... " Lost in conjectures, "we're floating around indecisively, in a kind of darkness. ... " (*Villa Milo*)

Island of Women, by the author of two other good novels, *The Young Assassins* and *Fiestas*, is the more conventional, tighter work. In controlled, tight-lipped fashion it describes some of the people lost in darkness. *Villa Milo* seeks to penetrate the darkness itself and seeks its clues in the ontological questions, "Who am I?" and why has history laid me aside, why is the air I breathe poisonous, why am I myself a void surrounded by death and nonsense? There is in both these books a kind of bitter nostalgia for the baptism of blood and fire, the clear-cut battle line which draws the individual to a cause and turns him away from his own inner desert.

Island of Women takes place in a resort outside Malaga. There a group of summer visitors, rich or successful Spaniards and richer foreigners cavort; and not since *La Dolce Vita* have we been faced with such stony-

faced frolicking: a collective life of dissolution whose rigorous leisure schedule is one of the longest and most tiring imaginable. The women are frigidly promiscuous and the men promiscuously frigid. And there is another little shade of Hemingway here in the capsule picture of a drifting generation, one lacking in romance but thereby more feverish. The group goes to a bullfight one afternoon and since it is a very bad one they leave in disgust. There is a trenchant symbol here and it is germane to Goytisolo's thesis; it has to do with the trappings of pretense, pretended danger, false risks, a sloppy and graceless imitation of rites which stir false emotions and produce an unbearable *ennui*.

Yet nobody is fooled (precisely because they are Spaniards) and one of the characters imagines that the boredom could be assuaged if a bull got loose in the alley and gored a guard. The bull, however, is docilely in the ring while the novice matador plays listlessly. And the heroine, or narrator, who had once risked her life for the ideals of the rebels in the war has now to face the dreary realities in which her idealism has turned to contempt and egoism.

Villa Milo's narrator is a boy who

has grown up in a brothel. There is no chronological order because Domingo, though no more concerned with psychological justification than Goytisolo, is describing an inner state, rather than its outward repercussions. The facts of the boy's origins are most pertinent since the question here is identity, the true being and uses of man. "I am Francisco de Dios y de Dios, Paco to my friends. My name is a lousy joke but, in a sense, it seems right for my life, which is more of a fantastic mockery and a bad rhyme than a life. . . . There is a real contradiction . . . that, on the one hand, my name is Paco de Dios y de Dios and I am the son of a whore and, on the other hand, it may be that I am named something else and have a tendency to be honest."

His name is Paco's essential concern, and it is a cosmic obsession because at the end Mossen Vena, a mystic and dissolute priest who is the most fascinating character in the book and may be Paco's father, calls him Manuel (God is with us) and tells him that someday he will realize that he is eternal joy, if he can once learn the pain and loneliness of being human, and understand that his end is real death, complete dissolution in God. It is this final dissolution which is symbolized by the carnal excesses of the Villa Milo, the whorehouse. In *Island of Women* the anguish is privation, but in this book it is an assault; anguish and suffering exist in totality every second.

Villa Milo uses the grotesqueries of the inhabitants and visitors of the brothel to counterpoint a sustained discussion of sin, mysticism, human injustice, and Divine Love. One comes from taking Communion to a wild orgy of sex and drink. But all the while, through the *sham* blasphemy, each of the characters stands in naked isolation before his unique possible salvation: the word of God, *vae soli*, the ultimate loneliness.

The characters in both these books remain in cosmic aloneness, deserted by purpose, feeling their country indifferent to them and their unaided selves inadequate to fill the gap, and faith elusive. They are at the beginning of knowledge or at the fringe of despair.

Black Muslims

Black Nationalism: A Search for an Identity in America. By E. U. Essien-Udom. The University of Chicago Press. \$6.95.

by Nat Hentoff

OF ALL the Negro nationalist movements in America since Marcus Garvey's legions some forty-five years ago, the strongest and most disciplined is the Nation of Islam, led by Elijah Muhammad. Its membership may be as many as 250,000 and it has branches in twenty-one states and the District of Columbia. According to the majority of press reports on the Black Muslims, they are a dangerous separatist sect committed to violence in their revolt against the white power structure.

Actually, the Muslims, while certainly opposed to integration into what they conceive to be a doomed and hopelessly corrupt Caucasian culture, are rhetorical rather than physical in their anger. Muhammad, moreover, has helped accomplish a certain amount of positive good for his followers, and the reasons for their growth do reveal much about the conflicting, increasing pressures among the lower-than-middle-classes of the Negro population.

The only previous full-scale investigation of the Muslims was a conscientious study by Professor C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*. This second and even more penetrating report on the history, structure and nature of the movement is by another Negro, Dr. E. U. Essien-Udom, a Nigerian who has been studying in the United States since 1951 and is now teaching at Harvard. Essien-Udom spent two years of intensive association with the Muslims in Chicago, the center of the inchoate Nation; and he has accumulated more inside information about them (including interviews with Muhammad and many of his subordinates) than anyone who has written about the Muslims.

His report is exceptionally judicious. He points out that Muhammad's appeal, however chimerical, to the lower class Negroes he has recruited lies in his ability to make

them feel proud of being black. However grotesque his eschatology and conception of history, Muhammad has given his followers both a sense of personal identity and of communality. Accordingly, they are sober, industrious, and committed to attempts (still nascent) at economic self-sufficiency. They are also free of crime; and while they are taught to fight back if attacked, they do not carry arms and are actually quite law-abiding except for their refusal to serve in the armed forces.

Why couldn't the NAACP and the Urban League have similarly galvanized these battered proletarians before Muhammad captured them? Part of Essien-Udom's answer is that Muhammad's conversions are usually among the poorest of those ghetto-packed Negroes who receive small psychic and even less material income from the growing integration of the Negro middle class, since their own futures are so limited by lack of skills and opportunities to rise in the labor and professional hierarchies of the predominantly white world downtown. They have yet to feel that a bus seat up front or a chance to vote for a political machine will do them much good. From Muhammad and the Temples of Islam, however, they receive a direct sense of sharing in both faith and works which are geared specifically to them.

Both that faith and those works may seem skimpy and fanciful to an outside rationalist, but to Muhammad's supporters, his seems to be the only game in town. As Essien-Udom puts it: "Neither white nor middle-class society offers a way out for the Negro masses . . . the lower-class Negro who has the capacity and motivation for self-improvement must seek it within the Negro community. He cannot afford the luxury of the middle-class make-believe. He knows he is black, but he wants to be self-respecting. He may be poor, but he wants to be decent."

Although the Muslims continue to gain new members, there is small likelihood of the movement ever becoming as disruptive a force as some of the more feverish newspaper and magazine articles would indicate.

Because the Muslims are enjoined to be apolitical, they exert no political pressure. Also, Muhammad's long-range vision of the triumph of the blacks is curiously passive. Allah will destroy the whites when the time comes, and faithful Muslims need only wait. And the largest obstacle to Muhammad's chance to head more than a fragment of American Negroes is that the vast majority of the Negro masses are simply not interested in the concept of a separate black state. As bitter as they are, Essien-Udom observes, they still "think of themselves as an 'American people' and seek to enjoy the benefits which American civilization proffers and to eliminate the disabilities which their present status entails" *within* the context of American civilization.

Ironically, as Essien-Udom is the first writer on the Muslims to point out in detail, what they are engaged in is an attempt to create their own private middle class. They too are much more attuned to American criteria of success than they realize. They function according to the vintage Protestant ethic—thrift, hard work, respectability, responsibility. Yet they reject Christianity and its promise of an afterlife as a white "ghost story." Or, as one Muslim says, "I decided perhaps I should have life before death rather than after." And they have substituted a ragged form of home-made Mohammedanism which is a minor part of what is essentially a prideful, all-Negro Operation Bootstrap.

When a formal graduation ceremony was held three years ago for students of the Chicago and Detroit schools run by the Muslims, the youngsters marched down the aisle in conventional caps and gowns. The accompanying music was not a fiercely militant call to black arms, but rather *Pomp and Circumstance*.

This book is an absorbing exercise in first-class reporting except for one unfortunate instance of over-assimilation—Dr. Essien-Udom has allowed himself to become seduced by American sociological diction. Otherwise, in the light of his scrupulous fairness, the book is another illustration of how often the majority of the press prejudices a story. And most

provocatively, Essien-Udom has emphasized that even after the current campaigns for wide-scale integration are won, there will be an even wider chasm between the "liberated" Negro middle class and the rootless Negro poor. Until the latter are made to feel that integration is meaningful for *them*, Mr. Muhammad's Nation of Islam will survive.

A Lowell Crib

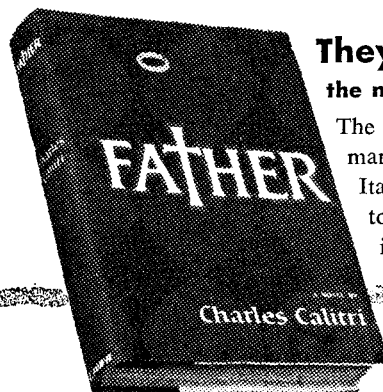
Robert Lowell: The First Twenty Years. By Hugh Staples. Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy. \$3.95.

by Janet Fiscallini

AT LAST we have a crib for Robert Lowell's early poems. One may have had much of *Lord Weary's Castle* by heart for years, and still be glad of a crib. Still, the reader must decide how much he is prepared to suffer for an explanation of many literary and autobiographical allusions, or even for a detailed and sensitive reading of the great "Colloquy in Black Rock."

In the first place, Mr. Staples writes in that wordless academic tradition which, once outside the specialized journals, grows superstitious and haunted and begins mumbling every platitude available. Even in the genre, he deserves some sort of award for reminding us, unhelpfully, of Donne on paradox, Blake on evil, Keats on allegory, Shelley on the One and the Many, Yeats on "poise," Eliot and Pound on the inevitable topics.

Secondly, in attempting to write a general introductory study around some scholarly notes and line by line readings, Mr. Staples has produced a rather unbalanced book. Those who want the introduction and paraphrase will be bored or alarmed by the accounts of rhyme schemes and the bibliographical apparatus; those who want the annotation will bite their nails at the process which turns journalistic into academic cliché. Many of the critical judgments are doubtful and unargued; some are rather pharisaical. The view of Lowell's "development" is descriptive at best; when it pre-



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tends to be more, it becomes foolish, repeating words like "hostility" and "affirmative" and italicizing "acceptance."

If this unpropitious time has an important poet, it is probably Robert Lowell. But when anything more than paraphrase and annotation of his poetry is to be done, it will require a sense of the world and possibility which this book lacks.

Lowell's obsessions are public and moral, for all his scholarship and his professionalism. He is especially the poet of the family and of war, and whoever interprets him must have, among other things, a mind for which world wars are as real as literary allusions. Incidentally, the tendency to deprecate political realities leads Mr. Staples into howlingly wrong or misleading accounts of "The Exile's Return," "For Ford Maddox Ford," and "Beyond the Alps."

The poetry asks also a more knowledgeable morality than Mr. Staples often shows. In this area, perhaps those few brilliant pages in Randall Jarrell's *Poetry and the Age* are sufficient for the present. But I

am glad to know about St. Stephen's Church in Bridgeport, Phillips' House, and other matters.

A Lost Childhood

Children of Heaven. By Christiane Rochefort. McKay. \$3.50.

by Catharine Hughes

CLOSING the pages of *Children of Heaven*, it is possible, finally, to define the emotion it has engendered. It cannot be other than regret: regret for the society from which it evolved—which, sadly, may be all the world—and for something else, something far closer to the essence of this frequently compelling, always poignant account of a young girl—a child, really—growing up. I do not know whether Christiane Rochefort intended to write an indictment of either contemporary France or contemporary man. It is perhaps improbable that she would have attempted anything so sweeping in only 119 pages. Yet, here it is.

Through the eyes of Josyane, we look upon the rest of her family: her essentially indifferent parents; the eleven brothers and sisters who, highly individual though they are, are ultimately only chattels in their parents' never-ending drive toward the state's rewards for the bearing of children. For Josyane, forced to do the housework, to care for the younger children, it is a world without joy. Her premature—and altogether indiscriminate—sexual experiences become the one source of life in an otherwise drab, meaningless existence. For a time, they, at least, offer something to look forward to.

There is relatively little "plot" to *Children of Heaven*. It is giving away nothing to say that, in the end, Josyane does find a love to replace those fleeting moments of lust which had come to constitute her experience of being. It is the compassion of Christiane Rochefort's novel, not "what happens," that renders it vital and moving. And it is a compassion which appears in many forms, sometimes cloaked in bitterness, often deceptively, unwittingly, mirrored.

Throughout, there is a sense of what Graham Greene has called "the

lost childhood"; one which, in this case at least, has been lost too soon (one wonders, of course, if it is not *always* too soon). Though her life, for several months, revolves around casual sexual encounters, Josyane, on another plane, has never really lost her innocence. In the sense that that "rebirth of wonder" for which poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti has cried out comes only to the *truly* innocent, Josyane has not forfeited it—and it is very close, really, to what she seeks. What she has done, perhaps, is to tinge it with that border of gray which should come only later.

The publishers couple Josyane with *Lolita*, which seems, on every level save that of sales, both unwise and inaccurate. Age is the only similarity; and it is not enough. The sardonic commentary of Nabokov is here replaced by a touching insight into childhood. There is a beautiful consistency in Josyane, in which the elements of youth and awakening experience come, at first dimly, then with startling clarity, into focus. If this is occasionally marred by the translator's excessive Anglicizing of dialog, that is a relatively small matter. Above all, Christiane Rochefort has known the world of childhood; known, remembered and imbued it with a flavor all its own, a flavor both nostalgic and frightening.

ART

New Figure Painting

IN THE introduction to the catalogue for *Recent Painting USA: The Figure*, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., notes a "prodigious variety of forms" in the exhibition now at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He suggests that a search for the meaning of this variety might lead to another question: "how rugged is the individualism?"

On the whole not very rugged, it seems. There is either a strident or a stubborn cast to many of these individualists; by and large they lack that utter conviction that one attributes to "ruggedness." An evident desire to strain after bizarre literary effects, or to stick to the guns of conventional forms, can be said to di-

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vide these painters of the figure, for the most part, into two camps. Relatively few of them strike that sound, sonorous note of assurance, that firm tone of inevitability and coherence, that is the mark of success in painting and in individualism too. Even some very good painting in this exhibit—I would note Ben Kamihira's *Wedding Dress* and Jean Seidenberg's *Eugenie*—can be placed in camps one and two (respectively) without injustice.

"This exhibition was not designed to survey all contemporary figurative painting in America. The selection was determined by the entries received." This accounts for the fact that several distinguished figurative artists are either missing or indifferently represented, perhaps. In any case the saving grace of the exhibit is that there are a number of really distinguished paintings in it. Though the general effect is one of nervous, strained performance—no doubt due to the feeling among these figurative artists that they are swimming against the abstract tide, whether it is ebbing or no—there are several truly substantial works of art, ruggedly individual in character, that detach themselves handsomely from their setting.

Among the most successful works are several that bear an intimate relationship to abstract expressionism—that is to say, they seem to have been nourished by it in various ways. The California artists Elmer Bischoff, Paul Wonner and Nathan Oliviera are among these, as is Eu-

gene Leake and the talented Ronni Solbert, whose *Jack and Idee* with its diaphanous color and spooky forms is one of the positive delights of the exhibit. These artists are utterly free from the defensive or offensive air that pervades the exhibit in general, and it may be due in part to the fact that they are not cut off from the main current but have evolved from it a strong personal expression that explores new territory. That this may sometimes be a limitation (except in the case of Oliviera, who seems to be boldly working out some far flung relationship between the individual and the void) as well as their strength, is a very arguable point: none of them seems to have broken the sound barrier or achieved a masterpiece as yet.

Two artists included in the show are indubitably rugged individualists who have thrown off almost all traces of their environment and also successfully stated a strong personal conception. Leon Golub's *Seated Boxer* is an excellent example of this Chicago artist's work, which in my opinion is marred by an addiction to a formula—although it must be admitted that his formula of representing man as a scarred sculptural form has a certain pathos and monumental dignity, as well as forceful unity of expression. Lester Johnson is an expressionist still, but his "figure" paintings seem to have

sprung full-fleshed from some primeval ooze. His frieze of heads entitled *Four Men* has a thick opaque surface on which a livid blue line jots cursory features. This painting makes a powerful individual statement, although what the artist rather gloomily depicts is mass-man or man engulfed in his environment of matter.

On the evidence of this exhibit it can be said that if individualism among American figure painters is rampant, it is generally not rugged, and only when it is really rugged do they succeed. The prodigious variety of forms revealed by this call to arms for figure painters has shown that their individualism is subject to the same test applied to painters within the abstract school and that being in revolt does not guarantee virtue any more than being in the social swim does.

BETTY KAUFMAN

REVIEWERS

Alice Ellen Mayhew, a regular contributor, is on the staff of a New York publishing house.

Nat Hentoff has written for *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *The Reporter* and other American journals.

Janet Fiscallini is herself a poet whose work has appeared in this and other American journals.

Catharine Hughes, a frequent contributor to these pages, works for a well-known New York publishing house.

Exhibition Schedule for *Recent Painting USA: The Figure*

Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.:

May 23, 1962-Sept. 4, 1962.

Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts:

Nov. 1-Nov. 20, 1962.

Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center: Jan. 30, 1963-Feb. 27, 1963.

Baltimore Museum of Art:

March 15, 1963-Apr. 26, 1963.

City Museum of St. Louis:

May 13-June 10, 1963.

San Francisco Museum of Art:

Aug. 18-Sept. 15, 1963.

Walker Art Center:

Oct. 1-November 12, 1963.

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A Timely Magazine

It is hardly an accident that The Commonweal should, in this issue, publish two provocative articles on the Supreme Court decision in the New York State prayer case. Nor is it an accident that this same issue should carry another article in The Commonweal's current series on the layman and the Council. Or an article on the Soviet Union and its satellites. Or movie and book reviews.

Indeed, it is the express aim of The Commonweal to provide its readers with relevant and thoughtful editorials, articles and reviews probing the burning issues of our time. As a journal of opinion edited by Catholic laymen, The Commonweal plays an important role in American publishing—presenting, with striking frequency, viewpoints and articles which many find to be unique and significant. Hence, nothing could be more relevant than for The Commonweal to take a particular interest in the Supreme Court prayer decision and the role of the laity in the Church. These matters are squarely in the province of The Commonweal's long tradition—a tradition dating back thirty-seven years.

Naturally, The Commonweal expresses a point of view. In the eyes of many, The Commonweal is known as a "liberal" magazine. In the sense in which this word is loosely used in American social and political life, it is perhaps accurate enough. Yet The Commonweal conceives of its role not as serving as an organ for a partisan point of view but, instead, that of confronting the complexities and challenges of the modern world.

The Church, Catholics have always held, is a contemporary Church with old and solid roots. In this sense, The Commonweal is concerned with the world in which we now live—with its social injustices, its threat of nuclear annihilation, its underdeveloped countries, its technical mastery and human insensitivity—but also with the heritage of Christian humanism and the sacredness of man which have come down to us through the ages.

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